IV

THE PASSION OF DIDO

Advice from a Sister

Ah, but the queen had hurt for a long time from a grievous wound that took her blood. Blind flame had consumed her: Aeneas’ Trojan pride and vigor came back to her over and over, the man’s looks and speech had embedded, clung to her breast. This love brought no peace to her body. When Phoebus’ lamp brightened and gazed on the country, Dawn parting the dewy shadows of heaven, she felt quite ill. She told her affable sister, “Anna, my sister, what dreams have scared and confused me!

10 How strange this man, the guest who’s advanced on our throne-room, what bearing and looks, what a strong chest in that armor! Yes—my faith’s not empty—I know he’s born of a Goddess: fear would reveal low birth. My God, what a Fate-tossed life he described, what war and exhaustion he told of! If I were not so set, so firmly decided never to join in marriage again with a person, after my first love died and deprived me, if every suitor’s torch and bed were not tedious . . . I might be able to yield to a single involvement.

20 Anna, to tell you the truth, since poor Sychaeus, my husband, died, since an evil brother scattered our House-Gods, only Aeneas has moved me, bending conviction, stirring feeling. In old fire I know there are cinders. Yet I’d hope the depths of the earth would be opened
first and strongest Jupiter’s lightning drive me to darkness, 
deep into Erebus’ night and colorless shadow, 
before I’d break a law of Shame or relax it. 
The man who married me first took all of my passion. 
I pray he’ll keep and protect my love when I’m buried.”

30 She stopped—tears had welled and dropped to her bosom. Anna told her, “Dearer than Light to your sister! Why waste youth on constant grief and aloneness, never knowing sweetness and joy, those children of Venus? You think love concerns much the ashes of dead men? Perhaps. But no one suitor has moved you from mourning, no Libyan, no one from Tyre before. You scoffed at Iarbas and other chiefs nurtured on African triumph, land and wealth; if love delights you now will you fight it? Consider too the men whose land you have settled: here, Gaetulian villagers, warlike invincible people, wild Numidians close by, the perilous Syrtes; there, dry stretches of desert and widely marauding Barcaeans. Need I mention your brother, the rising threat of war from Tyre? I truly believe some God favored the Trojan fleet’s course. The wind had Juno’s approval. Sister! Imagine the city and towering kingdom from such a marriage: with Trojans joining our army, what great affairs and glory Carthage will climb to!

50 Only ask for divine favor: with ritual victims welcome the Trojans. Knit some pretext to keep them—winter weather at sea, rains from Orion, damage to all their ships, the sky in disorder.”

Love Sacrifices

So a sister’s words fed the fire of her passion. Doubt yielded to hope. Modesty weakened. They went to a shrine first and prayed at the altar for peace: the right sheep were chosen and slaughtered for Ceres, the law-bearer, for lordly Bacchus, Apollo, and mainly for Juno, who cared for marital union.

60 Dido, herself radiant, carried a vessel and poured wine between the horns of a white-coated heifer while Gods looked on. Each day she renewed with procession or gift at a fat-rich altar. She peered in the opened breast of a dying beast and studied the entrails. Ignorant ways of augury! What joy can a temple
or vow bring to a love-craze? Soft flame was devouring
her marrow still. Her breast’s wound was quiet but spreading.

_{Love Moods}_

Feverish, cursed, Dido restlessly wandered
the whole town like a doe struck by an arrow
in Crete’s forest, hit off-guard by a distant
herdsman trying a shot and unknowingly leaving
metal lodged: the deer dodges through undergrowth, wanders
Dicta’s ravine, but the point clings to the ribcage and kills her.
Dido soon conducted Aeneas through Carthage,
displaying Sidonian wealth, a ready-made city.
Starting to speak she’d break off right in the middle.
Then with daylight lapsing she’d call for a banquet
again and wildly plead for a hearing of Trojan
hardship. Again she’d dote on the mouth of the speaker.

After they left, the dim moonlight declining
in turn, when setting stars inclined her to drop off,
she pined alone in the empty hall and reclined on
an empty couch. He’d gone but she heard him and saw him.
She often hugged Ascanius, thrilled by the father’s
image, as if to escape an unwordable passion.
A tower she’d started stopped rising. Her young men
worked no weapons. Port and fortifications
were unprepared for war. Work was unfinished.
Projecting walls and sky-tall cranes were inactive.

_{Juno and Venus Confer}_

Now, when the dear wife of Jupiter noticed
sickness gripping Dido, her name no match for the madness,
Saturn’s daughter approached Venus and told her,
“You’ve certainly won a rich prize, exceptional honor
for you and your Boy. What grand, memorable power:
two great Gods deceive and conquer a woman!
Yes, I’ve known how very suspicious of Carthage
you are. You fear our high rampart and buildings.
Where will it end? What’s next in this bitter contention?
Why not work instead for lasting peace, for a marriage
contract? You’ve gained what your whole spirit had aimed for—
Dido burning in love, her marrow a trail of madness—
so now let’s rule this people together with equal
omens. Let Dido serve a Phrygian husband,
placing people of Tyre in your hand as a dowry.”
Venus felt deceived. Juno was lying,
turning the rule of Italian shores into Punic.
Still she started to answer, "Who could refuse you,
madly choosing to wage war with your godhead?
If only Luck would approve the action you speak of!

110 Unsure Fates concern me. If Jupiter wants it—
one city standing for both Tyrian and Trojan
people, refugees mixed or joined in a compact—
you’re his wife: by law you probe his will with your prayer:
you lead, I’ll follow.” Juno regally answered,
“I’ll do that work. Now, for what is impending,
listen. I’ll briefly describe a way it can happen.
Love-sad Dido is ready, joined with Aeneas,
to go hunting in woods tomorrow when daybreak
leads out beams of the Sun, revealing the landscape.

120 I will darken clouds, pack them with hailstones:
while trembling beaters lash nets in a hollow
I’ll send down squalls and thunder: I’ll rattle the cosmos.
Groups will scatter in night-like darkness for cover.
Dido will rush to the same cave as the Trojan
leader. I’ll be there. Assure me you’re willing:
I’ll join and pronounce them surely and properly married.
There’s our wedding.” Not opposed to the offer,
Venus agreed. But she saw and smiled at the cunning.

Preparations for a Hunt

Dawn arose in due time, leaving the Ocean
behind. Handpicked men moved through the gateways
at sunrise with loose-strung nets and wide-pointed lances,
snares and scenting dogs, and a rush of Massylian horsemen.
The queen stayed in her room. Below at the threshold
Carthaginian chiefs waited. Her mount was a dazzling
purple and gold, frothing his bit, aggressively stamping.
Finally she emerged with a huge party around her.
She wore a Sidonian chlamys, hemmed and embroidered,
her quiver was made of gold, her hair in a golden
knot, her purple robe held by a golden

140 clasp. Trojan friends, too, with a happy Iulus,
marched along, Aeneas himself the most graceful
of all when he rode up, linking their columns together:
just like Apollo leaving the Xanthus in winter,
his Lycian home, to see his motherly Delos,
renewing the dance when Dryopians honor and circle
altars with Crete's people and daubed Agathyrsians: the Sun-God himself striding a ridgeline of Cynthus, the flow of his hair checked by a delicate gold-twined wreath, and shouldering jumbling arrows: Aeneas rode that lightly, his face exceptionally handsome. After they reached a high plateau, impassable wetland, look—wild goats flushed from escarpments ran downhill and deer bolted from other parts, crossing an open field in a column, massing a dustcloud running down from the mountain. The boy Ascanius, proud of his vigorous charger, already had raced past various groups in the central lowland: he vowed and prayed for spirited quarry, a sweating boar from the heights or a sand-colored lion.

Juno Sends a Storm

The sky meanwhile began to rumble profoundly. Rain followed and changed to a mixture of hailstones. Young Trojan and Tyrian company scattered at random through tiles. The Trojan grandson of Venus, alarmed, looked for cover. Streams rushed from the hillsides.

A Love Cave

Dido came to the same cave as the Trojan leader. Primal Earth and Juno, Goddess of Marriage, gave a sign to the knowing Air, and the lightning flashed at this rite. Nymphs called from a hilltop. That was the first evil day, the first of her dying, for Dido. No longer concerned with appearance or rumor, dwelling no longer now on a secret liaison, she called it "marriage." The word covered her weakness.

No Evil is Faster

Rumor instantly moved through large Libyan cities. No other evil we know is faster than Rumor, thriving on speed and becoming stronger by running. Small and timid at first, then borne on a light air, she flits over ground while hiding her head in a cloud-top. Mother Earth, they say, deeply provoked by the Sky-Gods, bore this daughter last: Enceladus' sister and Coeus' light on her feet and agile at flying, but broad and fearful: a monster whose bodily plumage matches her numerous leering eyes (amazing to hear of),
her many mouths, upraised ears and jabbering accents. At night she flaps between earth and sky in the shadows, buzzing—her eyes won't yield to the pleasure of sleeping. By day she squats on a house roof like a watchman high in his tower, scaring eminent townsmen, telling some truth but clinging to lies and distortion. Now she filled people with various gossip, gladly singing both her fact and her fiction:

Aeneas had sprung from a Trojan bloodline and come here, lovely Dido accepted the man as her husband, now they passed a long winter together in pleasure, thralls of a shameless desire, forgetting their kingship. The Goddess spread her dirt on the lips of the people.

**Love Frustration**

Swiftly she veered in flight to a ruler, Iarbas, scorching his mind with chatter and building up anger. Son of a ravished African Nymph and of Hammon, Iarbas had built in his broad kingdom a hundred shrines and altars to Jupiter, blessing the watchful, long-lived flames for his God. Fat-dripping victims bloodied the ground; portals flowered with various garlands. Bitterly smarting now where Rumor had burned him he prayed at a shrine with the God's power around him, palms upturned, humbly begging of Jupiter often: "All-powerful Father, for whom my Maurusian people feast on embroidered couches and offer up wine-gifts, you see all this? You hurl thunderbolts, Father: it's foolish to dread them? Your blind flashes in cloudbanks cowing the mind, rumbling heaven: they're empty?

A woman wandered our land, paid to establish a skimpy town, we gave her shore-land for plowing, laws for the place: this woman, who spurned our proposal of marriage, takes as lord of her kingdom Aeneas. Now even a Paris attended by eunuchs, hair oiled, his chin wound in a Lydian headdress, can take and own her. Surely we carried our presents to all your shrines and cherished your glory for nothing."

He spoke and prayed like that, holding an altar.

**Jupiter Sends Down Mercury**

The strongest God heard him. He turned and looked on the royal halls where the lovers now had forgotten their better
name. He summoned Mercury next and advised him, “Hurry, my son: call for the Westwind and glide on your wings to the Trojan prince who dallies in Punic Carthage, neglecting walls our Fates will provide him. Carry my word through the air quickly and tell him: you’re not the man promised to God by your lovely Mother who saved you twice from Greeks and their weapons: he was to rule Italy, fully an empire,

230 a people who’d clamor for war, descended from Teucer’s high bloodline, submitting the whole world to their treaties. If all that glory in great affairs will not fire you, if honor itself won’t make you carry your burden, think of your fatherhood: don’t keep Rome from Iulus. What do you plan and hope for dawdling with hostile people, ignoring Lavinian land and Ausonian children? Sail: that’s the point. Give him that message.”

The God Mercury prepared to obey his majestic Father’s command by strapping his feet in the golden shoes first which would carry him high over water and land, each wing on the footwear faster than gale-wind. He took the caduceus next which could summon the pallid spirits from Orcus or send them down to Underworld sorrow, give or remove sleep, and sign the lids of a dead man. Its force could drive a wind or help him in swimming through stormcloud. Already he noted the steeps of a mountain, the hard peak of Atlas, supporting the ecliptic—Atlas, whom dark clouds constantly circle, the pine-carrying top pelted by Northwind and downpour,

240 shoulders covered in snow, waterfalls plunging from the old chin, his beard bristling with glacier. Mercury stopped here first, maintaining his balance with wingbeats. Then his whole body dove in a headlong descent like a bird circling a shoreline and diving fast into water close to rocks where the fish are: that’s how the God flew from a midpoint in heaven to Libyan shore and sand, cutting through crosswind—truly his mother’s father’s grandson, raised on Cyllene.

_The God Rebukes Aeneas_

Soon as he touched with winged feet by a cottage,

260 he saw Aeneas founding defenses and building new homes—the sword he wore a starring of yellow jasper, the cape that hung from one shoulder a burning
Tyrian purple, a lavish present that Dido
had made, weaving gold thread in the webwork.
Mercury stopped him fast. "Laying foundations
for high Carthage now? Building a beautiful woman's
town, sadly forgetting your own realm and resources?
The Gods' Ruler himself dispatched me from brilliant
Olympus: his will rotates the land and the heavens:
he told me himself to carry this word on the fast-moving air-waves.
What do you plan or hope for, idling in Libyan country?
If taking glory in great affairs will not move you,
if honor itself won't make you carry your burden,
look to Ascanius: growing, in hope of inheriting
Roman land. An Italian kingdom is owed to
Iulus." Cyllenius broke off speech and he left him
there in the midst of that warning, he vanished from human
sight in the distance, buoyed on a tenuous updraft.

Love Confusion

Aeneas was truly amazed, struck dumb by the vision.

Words stuck in his throat; his hair bristled in terror.
He yearned to escape, to leave that pleasureable country,
stunned by the great warning and power of heaven.
But how should he act? The queen would surely be outraged:
how could he dare approach or begin to address her?
He thought it out quickly, distinguishing this way and that way,
taking different views, considering all sides.
One option seemed, among the alternatives, worthwhile.
He told Sergestus, Mnestheus and daring Serestus
to ready the fleet quietly, gather the crewmen,
break out arms on the beach, and improvise reasons
for any strange move. With excellent Dido
doubting, meanwhile, her great love could be injured,
Aeneas would try at the gentlest time to approach her
and speak: he'd look for the right way. Everyone quickly
and gladly prepared to obey the commands of their leader.

Love Awareness and Outrage

Ah, but the queen suspected deceit. Can a lover
be fooled by anyone? First she heard of their movements.
Fearing it all, though safe, she fumed. Maliciously Rumor
told her the fleet was armed and ready to travel.

She felt angry, helpless. She heatedly wandered
the city the way Bacchae react to their brandished
icons when shouts to the Wine-God startle and call them at night to Mount Cithaeron’s biennial revels. At length confronting Aeneas she willfully told him, “You actually hoped to hide the extent of this malice? To break faith and sneak from my country in silence? Our love won’t keep you, the hand that you gave me once? Or hard death coming to Dido? No. You even load your ships under a winter sky, rush off to sea surrounded by Northwind. Ruthless man! What if the home and land you are seeking were known and friendly—if ancient Troy were surviving—would ships go looking for Troy in billowing water? You run from me? My tears and the hand that you gave me implore you—I’m left with nothing else in my folly—our marriage rite, the wedding we started together, if I’ve deserved well of you, think of the pleasure I gave you, if any, pity a house that is shaken: change your mind. If prayer has a place then I pray you.

You’re the reason Numidian chiefs and Libyan people hate me, my Tyrians hate me—you are the reason my shame went out, my former name—and my only approach to the stars. My guest, what death do you leave me? Is ‘guest’ all that I have? Once you were ‘husband’... Why live on? Either my brother Pygmalion wrecks my walls, or Iarbas, the African, makes me a captive. At least if I’d borne your child before we had parted, if only an infant were here, a little Aeneas to play in my hall and go on recalling your features,

I shouldn’t seem so utterly seized and abandoned.”

Demands of God and Family

She stopped there. Aeneas, warned by Jupiter, struggled to keep his vision steady. He deeply repressed his emotion. He answered soon, briefly: “My queen, I’ll never deny them—all the claims you have power to list, and deserve to. For me there’ll never be shame to remember Elissa while spirit and memory themselves last in my body. I’ll speak of my cause in brief. I never hoped to dissemble and run off—don’t think that. And I never extended a husband’s torch or entered a marital contract.

If God’s word had allowed me to live out my life there, freely arranging my own concerns and my omens, I’d live in the city of Troy first and care for a precious
remnant of people. Priam's high roof would be standing,  
I'd try to restore Troy myself for the losers.  
No: Grænan Apollo commands me to Italy.  
Wrest Italian greatness, the lots of Lycia tell me:  
there's my love and homeland. If towers of Carthage,  
the sight of an African city, engage you Phœncicians,  
why should you hate Trojans for settling Ausonian  
land? It's right for us too to seek out a kingdom.  
My Father Anchises warned me often when midnight  
covered fields in damp shadow: whenever the burning  
stars appeared his form troubled and frightened my dreaming.  
My boy Ascanius, too: should I injure the person  
I love, defraud him of Western Land he's destined to govern?  
Even the Gods' herald—Jupiter sent him  
himself, I swear on our heads—carried the order  
down on a speeding wind. I saw him myself in the clearest  
daylight: he walked through a wall, I heard his voice and  
absorbed it.

360 Stop, then: don't burn yourself and me with resentment.  
I don't pursue Italy freely."

Love Fury

She'd eyed him askance all the time he addressed her,  
turning her glance this way and that, silently taking  
him all in. Now in a fever she told him,  
"No God was your parent, no Dardanus founded your people,  
traitor: hard rock and frost of the Caucasus mountains  
gave you birth. Tigresses' teats in Hyrkania nursed you.  
Why should I hold back? To save myself for a greater  
pain? Did you sigh at my tears, lower your vision  
or weep at all, feel lost or pity a lover?  
What can I say first? That neither powerful Juno  
nor fatherly Jupiter looks on now with some fairness?  
Trust is safe nowhere. Thrown on the beach you came begging,  
I madly took you, offered you half of my kingdom,  
saved your whole lost fleet from disaster.  
What pain, what Furies drive and scald me! Apollo's your prophet  
now, some Lycian oracle? Heaven's messenger hurried  
through air from Jupiter here with your scary instructions?  
Hard work for your Gods. I'm sure anxiety troubles  
their rest! I won't detain you or counter your speeches.  
Go: search through Italian winds and waves for your kingdom.  
If honest Gods provide, I hope you will drink in
pain, surrounded by rock and calling on Dido's name often. I'll be a black fire though I'm absent: when death's cold severs the flesh from the spirit, I'll be in shadow everywhere. Crime will be punished, traitor. I'll hear your tale below among dead men."

Though half done she broke off and ran as if sickened, turned from his looks, the air he breathed, and she left him deeply worried, cautious but ready to tell her more. Servants helped her, supporting her slumping body back to her marble room. She lay on her bed there.

_The Labor of Ants_

Aeneas had done his duty, although he was longing to calm her fears by talking, to soothe and soften her anguish. He sighed deeply, unnerved by his great love for this woman. Still he obeyed the God's order and left for the shipyard. There on the whole shore Trojans had labored, hauled down tall ships and caulked up the bottoms—carrying shoots and untrimmed boughs from the woods, they had launched some.

They really longed to escape.
Imagine their rushing to quit the city completely just like ants who have plundered ponderous caches of corn and hauled them back to their hill to anticipate winter: the black column works through a field on a narrow mossy track moving their loot, some of them pushing huge grains, their backs struggling, others corralling, poking at stragglers: the whole path seethes with their labor.

_A Sister's Help_

What did you feel then, Dido, watching that bustle? How did you sigh, observing the whole feverish coastline high in your tower, seeing the breadth of that water aswirl before your eyes with all-out hurry and uproar? What end will extreme desire pressure a human heart to? Again driven to tears, again to the effort of humbly begging, her spirit yielded to passion:
she'd leave nothing untired, nor die for no reason. "Scurrying around the whole beach—look at them, Anna, massed everywhere. Winds call to their canvas, crewmen already are gladly sporting their garlands. Since I myself was able to see the agony coming, I'm able to bear it, sister. It's wretched; but do me
one favor, Anna. That liar made you a signal
friend at times, he told you some innermost feelings.
Only you may know the gentlest time to approach him.
Go to him, sister. Humbly remind our imperious
guest I never swore with Greeks at Aulis to wipe out
Troy’s people. I sent no fleet to the city,
nor ripped up dead spirits, the dust of his father Anchises.
Why are my words denied, his hearing so hardened?
Where does he rush to? Tell him my last wish as a wretched
lover: wait for a better wind and easier sailing.
I want no marriage now. He disavowed it, it’s over.
Let him not lose or neglect Latium’s beautiful kingdom.
I do want empty time, space to rest from this madness,
while Luck teaches me how to lose and be sorry.
That’s the last favor I ask, Anna, for pity.
I’ll pay him back, if he gives it, in full when I’m dying.”
That was the tearful plea which her miserable sister
brought—and re-brought—to Aeneas. But nothing could move
him.

He heard no word or weeping: the man was unbending.

The Fates forbade it: a God stopped up his hearing.
Just like an old strong oaktree which Alpine
winds buffet this way and that, in a struggle
among themselves to uproot it: creaking, the highest
leaves thrown to the ground when the treetrunk is jostled,
it still holds to its cliff: as high as it reaches
for air and sky, roots go down to the Death-world:
so with this leader. Words continually struck him
here, now there, he felt the anxiety deeply.
Yet he remained unmoved. Tears trickled for nothing.

Love Visions

Now Dido truly feared for her future.
Cursed, tired of seeing the arched sky, she went begging
for death. To help her leave the light, to end what she’d started
sooner, she saw while placing incense and gifts on an altar
the ritual water blacken—to tell it is frightful—
the wine she poured turned into blood and repulsed her.
She shared this vision with no one, not even her sister.
And more. A marble shrine stood in the palace,
tended by Dido with great devotion to honor her former
husband. White wool and sacred foliage clasped it.

There she seemed to hear a man as if calling,
the sound of his voice at night when the land was in darkness. A lonely owl often complained from a rooftop in drawn-out hoots—sad, funereal bird-calls. Old-time prophets, too, many predictions terrified and warned her. A savage Aeneas himself drove her mad in a dream: always abandoned, left to herself, always friendless, she seemed to be walking a long road through bare country looking for Trojans. Just like crazed Pentheus watching a column of Furies, paired suns, Thebes revealed as if doubled, or Agamemnon’s son Orestes when driven across the stage in flight from his mother, armed with her torches and black snakes, while Furies linger in doorways.

_A Massyllian Priestess_

Wrecked by grief therefore and caught in a madness, she fixed on death. She picked the moment and method herself. She approached her distraught sister and told her—a hopeful face and calm brow concealed her decision—‘I’ve found a way, Anna. Be glad for your sister! I’ll bring him back or free myself from this passion.

Close to the setting sun, bordering Ocean, in far-off Ethiopian land powerful Atlas turns the world on his back while it’s burning with inlaid stars. From there I’ve met a Massyllian priestess who cares for Evening’s temple and offers her serpent its meals, guarding the sacred boughs of an old tree, sprinkling poppy seeds and honey at sleep-time. The woman claims she can free minds with her music if so inclined, weigh someone with ponderous worry, stop a river’s flow, alter the movement of stars and stir ghosts at night. The ground that you stand on will low, you’ll see: ash-trees will move from the mountains! My dear sister, I swear by the Gods and your precious life I do not willingly dress in magical power. So raise a pyre under the open sky of the courtyard quietly. Heap it with all my remnants, the armor that evil man left, fixed on my wall—and the marriage bed that killed me. Erasing every remembrance of hateful men gives us joy. The priestess demands it.” She stopped speaking—pallor had covered her features.

Anna could not believe her sister was hiding death in some odd rites, or conceive of a monstrous
rage: was all this worse than the death of Sychaeus?
She followed orders accordingly.
Soon as the pyre stood in the open air of the central
palace, a huge mound of pine branches and oak-logs,
the queen strung garland and crowned the assortment
with death-leaves. Now clearly aware of her future,
she placed on a couch the sword he’d left, a picture, some clothing.
Altars arranged in a circle, her hair streaming, the priestess
pealed out three hundred Gods—Erebus, Chaos,
three-formed Hecate, three-faced Diana, the virgin.
She sprinkled water alleged to have sprung from Avernus.
She looked for mature plants and cut them with copper
shears by moonlight, their milk poisonous, blackish.
She looked for a love-charm too—the membrane torn from a
new-born
foal’s brow, yanked by its mare.
Dido, close to the altar, dutifully carried
grain, one foot unstrapped. Her robe was unbelted.
Soon to die, she prayed and called to a Sky-God
conscious of destiny, just and remembering Powers,
if any, who cared for lovers contracted unfairly.

*Love Wakefulness*

Then it was night. Weary bodies were reaching
for sleep or rest on the earth. Forest and savage
sea had quieted; stars rolled halfway through heaven
and every field lay still. Cattle and painted
birds, roosting in rough woodland or brambles
near large lakes, were settled in sleep in the silent
dark, less anxious now, their hearts unconscious of labor.
But not that sad Phoenician heart: it was never

relaxed in sleep, she never accepted night in her bosom
or eyes, her concerns multiplied, passion and anger
surged again in a long, moiling surf of resentment.
She said to herself, her heart tumbling inside her,
"Look at me: what should I do? Try some earlier suitor
again, be laughed at, humbly beg for a Nomad in marriage?
By now I’ve scoffed too often myself at such husbands.
What then? Follow the Trojan fleet and a Trojan
command to the end? Because they’re glad that I help them,
or thanks for my former help will stay in their memory?

Suppose I want that: which proud ship will receive me,
a person they hate? Lost, ignorant Dido—
still not seeing the lies of Laomedon’s people.  
What, then? Run off with a party of clamoring crewmen,  
crowd my own Tyrians around me and set out  
with people I pulled just now from Sidonian cities?  
Drive them again into sea-wind, tell them to spread out our  
canvas?  
No. Die: you deserve to. A sword gets rid of your sorrow.  
Tears prevailed on Anna to start with—my sister  
peaked a sickness that made me insane, exposed to a stranger.  

I’m not allowed to pass through life as a widow  
free from fault, untouched by care like some wild thing.  
I failed my trust, my pledge to the dust of Sychaeus.””  
Breaking her own heart, she went on bitterly grieving.  

_Again the Gods’ Messenger_  

High on the stern now, determined to set out,  
Aeneas rested. Things were prepared and in order.  
Abruptly the same God’s form, with his features  
close to the man while dreaming, appeared to admonish—  
in every respect like Mercury’s voice and complexion—  
hair like gold, torso youthful and graceful:  

“Son of the Goddess! You linger and sleep in such danger?  
Can’t you see right now the threat that surrounds you?  
Insane or deaf to the favoring breath of the Westwind?  
The queen’s breast churns with deceit and desperate evil:  
fixed on death, she’s a moiling surf of resentment.  
Fly headlong from here while flight’s in your power!  
Soon you’ll find this water a jumble of timber,  
fiercely glaring torches, the beach glowing with firelight,  
unless you break from the shore. Stop waiting for daylight,  
no more delays, wake up! The woman’s a constant  
swing of change.”” He melded in dark night when he finished.  

_Terror and Departure_  

Doubly alarmed by the sudden vision, Aeneas  
yanked his body from sleep and scolded companions,  
“Quickly, you men, take to the thwarts and your watches,  
loosen the sail fast—a God’s been sent from the highest  
air to rush our escape—look, he goads us again there,  
to cut our twisted cables. Holy Lord, we will follow,  
whomever you are. We accept your rule once more and applaud it.  
Stay close and calmly help: bring from your heaven  
the right stars.”” He stopped to pull a sword from its scabbard
and slash a cable—the sharp blade was like lightning. 
Similar heat possessed them all. Grabbing and running, 
they cleared the whole beach, their ships covered the road-
stead, 
they strained, churned up blue-grey foam and swept through 
the water.

Love Savagery

Dawn left the saffron bed of Tithonus 
shortly and scattered first light on the country. 
The queen, soon as she saw whitening daylight 
high in her tower, then sail and ship in formation, 
seeing shore and harbor emptied of rowers, 
struck her lovely breast with a fist a third and a fourth time, 
tore out blond hair, "Jupiter, look at 
the upstart go," she cried, "making fun of our power! 
Won't all of Carthage take out weapons and chase them? 
Tyrians wreck their cables and fleet? Hurry and bring me 
torches, go! Drive at your oars, hand out the armor! 
What did I say? Where am I? What madness muddles my 
thinking? 
Hapless Dido: now do godless actions impress you? 
They suited you then—when you gave him your scepter. Look at 
the faithful 
man's hand: he carried a fatherland's House-Gods, 
they say, shouldered an aged, weakening father.

Couldn't I clutch him, dismember and scatter the body 
at sea? Put to the sword his men and Ilus 
himself, set a feast on board for the father? 
War's outcome is doubtful, yes. But what of it? 
What should I fear when dying? If only I'd carried 
fire to his camp, burned each gangway, murdered the father, 
son and the lot—and tossed myself on the ash-heap!

The Future of Rome Cursed

"Sun-God: your fire sees and lightens all of our labor. 
Juno: you know our every anxiety's meaning. 
Hecate: you wail nightly at crossroads in cities.

Vengeful Furies, all you Gods of a dying Elissa: 
hear and accept my prayer, attend with your power: 
my pain has earned it. If sailing and reaching a harbor 
must happen now to the man, that unspeakable person, 
if Jupiter's word demands that goal be accomplished,
still let war convulse him, swords of presumptuous people:
let him be torn from his own land and the face of Iulus.
Let him beg for help and witness the shameful
deaths of friends. Let him yield to unfair terms in a peace-pact
and never enjoy the rule or sunlight he longed for,
but topple before his time in bare gravel, unburied.
There's my plea—the last word to be poured with my life-blood.
And all you Tyrians, hunt those men in the future,
hate them and send word of this favor down to my ashes:
give no love, make no pact with that people.
Rise from my bones, whatever revenger will follow,
pursue with fire and sword Dardanus' nation
now or whatever time gives you strength in the future.
Let sea be against sea, and seacoast at seacoast!
I call for arms fighting with arms—their own and their children's."

Love Ending

630 While speaking she turned in every mental direction,
longing to break soon from the daylight she hated.
She spoke briefly to Barce, nurse of Syeaeus
(her own nurse's bleak remains were still in her former
land): "My dear nurse, go bring Anna, my sister.
Tell her to hurry: wash her body in river
water and lead out calves, the proper atonement.
Both of you come. Cover your temples with ritual garland.
I want to conclude rites duly begun for
the Underworld's Jupiter, put an end to my trouble,
and send Troy's leader in flame from the death-pyre."
She stopped; the old one bustled away with intentness.
Dido trembled wildly now that the dreadful
thing had begun, her eyes bloody and rolling, her nervous
cheeks flecked with red. Pale at the death which approached her
she dashed to the building's inner court, she ascended
the tall pyre distractedly, pulled out the Trojan
sword—a gift she had wanted—not for this purpose.
Here, seeing the bed and familiar Trojan
clothes, she brooded, moved to weeping a little.

650 She lay on the bed and spoke—the words were her last ones:
"Sweet spoils—while you Gods and Fates were indulgent.
Take my spirit. Free my heart from its caring.
I lived: I finished the course Fortune provided.
Now my exalted form goes down to the Death-world.
I've seen my walls: I've raised an illustrious city.
I made a hostile brother pay in revenge for my husband. Happy—yes, too happy—if only a Trojan keel had never touched the coastline of Carthage.” Pausing, pressing her face on the bed: “We’ll die unavenged here, but die,” she said. “So. It helps to go down into darkness. The eyes of a cruel Trojan will spot this cremation at sea and find an evil sign in my death-fire.”

The City in Consternation

Words broke off—a servant noticed her falling, the froth of blood at the sword, a forearm of Dido all stained. Cries went up to the courtyard roof, the story ran through the city and stunned it. Buildings echoed the sighs and wailing of women in grief, the whole sky re-echoed the uproar as though all of Carthage had suddenly fallen to hostile attack, or ancient Tyre in a frenzy of rolling flame from Gods’ and citizens’ rooftops.

The Grief of a Sister

Anna rushed back terrified, shaking and breathless. She beat her breast, her nails disfigured her features, she ran through the crowd calling the dying woman by name. “Dido, what’s this? You wanted to trick me? For this I prepared the pyre, altar and firelight? I’m lost. How can I scold you first, for scorning a sister and friend by dying? The same death should have called me: your sword’s pain should have taken us both in this hour.

My voice invoked our Fathers’ Gods and my fingers worked to place you here, so cruel—and me missing. You’ve killed yourself and me, sister, your people, the city, Sidonian fathers. . . Give me some water: I’ll wash the wounds. A last wandering breath here? My mouth will catch it.” Climbing the steep ladder while speaking, she’d held her near-dead sister, embraced her and warmed her. She cried and sopped up dark blood with her mantel.

Help from Heaven in Dying

The queen tried once more to lift up her heavy eyes but failed, her chest deeply wounded and gasping.

She struggled three times to lift herself on an elbow but rolled back on the bed three times. Her wandering vision
searched the deep sky for sun: she sighed when she found it. At length powerful Juno pitied her wretched, long death. She sent Iris from heaven to free the wrestling spirit from knots of the body. For Dido neither deserved to die nor was destined: sudden grief and madness before her time had consumed her. Proserpine still had not yet taken a golden curl from her head or sent the spirit to Orcus.

So Iris flew from the sky, trailing a thousand moist colors reflecting the sun, gliding on saffron wings. She stopped by Dido: “I’m taking an offering now at the Death-God’s command. Your life is freed from its body.”

Her hand clipped hair while she spoke. Quickly and wholly the warmth diminished. A life was gone on the breezes.